

PHYLLOSTICTA LEAF SPOT OF DRACENA

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Dracena, a native of tropical regions mostly in the eastern hemisphere, can be grown either outdoors as tree-like plants up to 60 ft high or indoors as small potted ornamentals frequently seen in homes, offices, and greenhouses (1). Several species of Dracaena are grown in Florida, and this important ornamental crop is valued at more than \$1.5 million annually. The fungus *Phyllosticta dracaenae* Griff. & Maubl. causes a serious leaf spot disease of Dracaena spp. in Florida. Other species of *Phyllosticta* are also known to cause leaf spots on dracena but they have not been reported as frequently (3,4).

SYMPTOMS The leaf spot caused by *Phyllosticta dracaenae* is circular to irregular in shape, 1 to 5 mm in diameter, and occurs on both upper and lower surfaces of primarily older leaves. The lesions as shown in figure 1 commonly have brown centers with purple borders and yellow halos (2). Where leaf infection is heavy, complete foliar necrosis may occur.

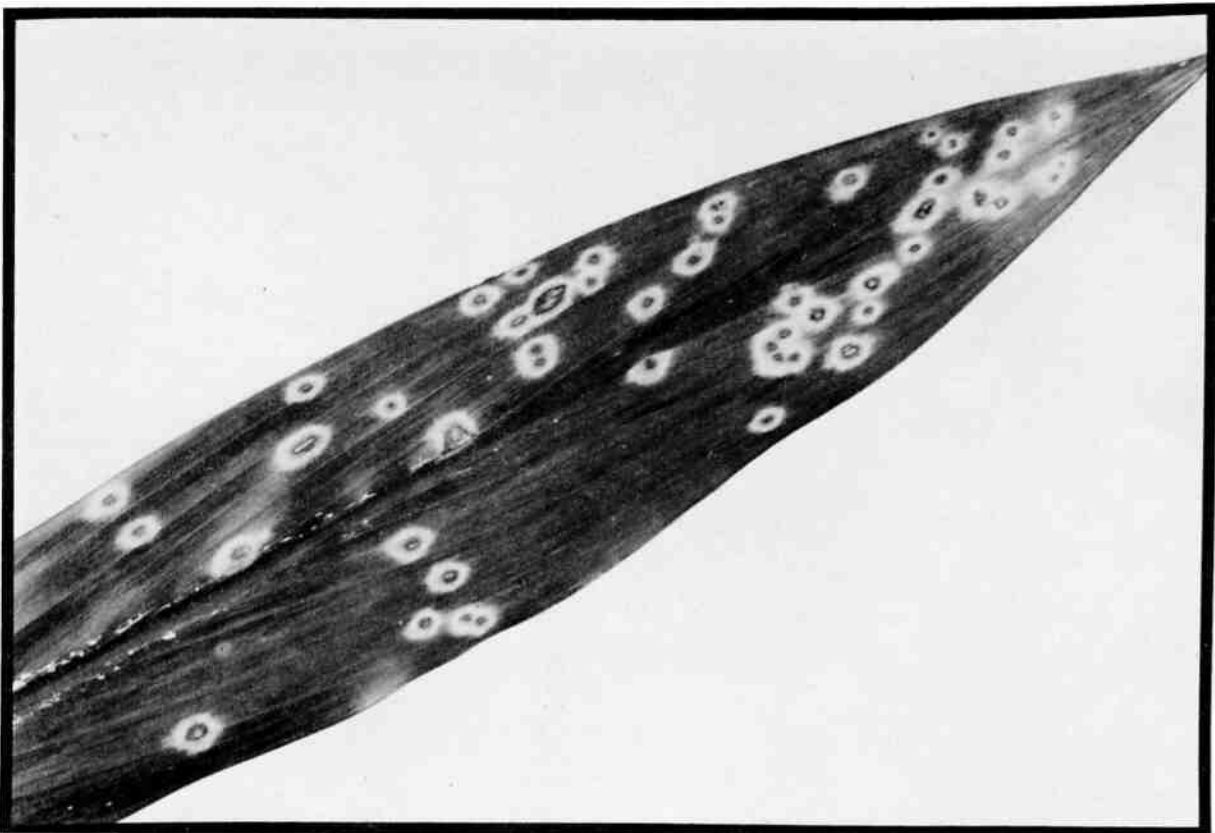


Fig. 1. *Phyllosticta* leaf spot of dracena.

CONTROL. Heavy watering, particularly overhead, aids in the spread of fungus spores resulting in increased disease severity. Avoid overhead watering where possible, and pick off and destroy infected leaves (2). Dithane M-45 or Daconil sprayed regularly every 2 weeks will serve as a protectant against this leaf spot disease (Howard Miller, unpublished).

Literature Cited

1. Bailey, L. H. 1971. Dracaena, p. 241-242. In Manual of cultivated plants. MacMillan Co., New York.
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3. U. S. Dept. Agr. Handbook No. 165. 1960. Dracaena, p. 283. In Index of plant diseases in the United States. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.
4. Westcott, C. 1960. Dracaena, p. 542. In Plant disease handbook. 2nd ed. D. van Nostrand Co., New York.